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# USDA Inside USDA Information

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## INSIDE "INSIDE..."

Reminders of the Ag Science Inf Conference...demand for farm newsletters...job offers...a few notes from here and there...and a handful of brief comments and statements also from here and there. Seek and ye shall find in this issue.

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## REGISTER NOW FOR AMES

Packets of announcements and advance registration forms should be in your offices by now about the National Agricultural Science Information Conference. It's set for Oct. 22-26 in Ames, Iowa. Mason Miller, SEA-CR, mailed the materials and is chairman of the planning committee for the conference.

If you haven't received information about the meeting, get in touch with Mason at (202) 447-5059.

It's been 8-1/2 years since folks interested in science communication had such an opportunity to discuss the subject with users. This year's meeting is set up in two sections. First there'll be a general conference for everyone with speakers and time for small group interaction and for sharing ideas. Then there will be a special science writing workshop for USDA and land-grant university agriculture and forestry information staff members only.

Anyone interested in science comm. is welcome to attend the main conference...which runs from Monday evening, Oct. 22, to noon on Thursday, Oct. 26. Teams of research administrators, scientists and communicators are encouraged to attend.

Registration fee for the main conference is \$50. The workshop registration is \$25. Each is a per person fee. As soon as folks register, Mason will forward housing information...place will be at nearby motor hotel facilities; the meeting will be held in the Scheman Continuing Education Building on the Iowa State campus.

Remember, get in touch with Mason Miller, not "Inside..." His address is SEA-Cooperative Research, USDA, Room 415-W, Administration Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20250. Or call him at (202) 447-5059. And spread the word to others about the conference too.

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## DESIGN FOR SAM

Sam Shaffer, Forest Service-Alaska, has written saying his office needs timely notices about training opportunities for inf people...often by the time we hear about courses, he said, registration dates are past. "We're especially interested in correspondence courses, since the cost of transportation is so great from Alaska."

We hope the notice of the Ames meeting will give Sam enough time to get a group set up to attend.

Sam noted that two folks from his office attended the 8th Nick Chaparos Design Seminar in Los Angeles last March. (We mentioned that designers should contact Chaparos last month.) Anyhow, Sam noted that David Sutton, GPA design chief was on the program to present his proposed visual management manual to the group. It was generally well received, according to Sam.

In fact, Sam called the session the "best training I've had since I joined USDA. State people will be missing a good chance to have their work critiqued and to learn about improvements in design if they don't try to attend."

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#### ALL FOR FARMERS

Ben Blankenship, Economics, Statistics and Cooperatives Service (ESCS), says subscriptions to Farmers' Newsletters have increased "smartly" since March. The total seems likely to reach the 200,000 target ESCS set for the end of fiscal 1979.

He says he's projecting average subscriptions per title at nearly 95,000 for fiscal 1980, with the total list exceeding 250,000 by the end of the year. Now the badnews...postal outlay will become more than \$500,000.

Ben notes also that Diane Decker, who produces the newsletters, picked off an award for editorial excellence from ACE last month.

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MIXING BEES AND WATER? From John W. Thorne, Jr., U of Florida, comes word that the two ACE award-winning films from Florida are available for sale or, if another office has a comparable film, for trade.

The films are "Beginning Beekeeping" and "Eternal Water."

"Beginning Beekeeping" is a 23-min. documentary designed to introduce the novice to the art of raising bees. It features closeup photography of bees in the hive and provides an excellent summary of the process of establishing a hive.

"Eternal Water" is 28-min...documents water problems and the history of water rights in America.

If you're interested, contact John at IFAS, Editorial Dept., G022 McCarty Hall, Gainesville 32611.

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#### MORE SPEECH OPENERS

We've about had enough of speech openers, and you have too, we'll bet. But here are a couple "Inside..." got this week.

Bill Hamilton, Forest Service, says this one came from an administrator talking to some scientists (not in agriculture): "Usually a talk of this sort can start either of two ways--you can take the academic approach and define your terms, or you can take the casual approach and tell a story."

Then Stu Sutherland, Science and Education Administration, sent a whole batch he would like to hear. Included was: "I'm going

to tell you again what I told you at your annual meeting three years ago, since you have not adopted my suggestions as yet."

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SO LONG, HOWARD

Life just isn't going to be the same around USDA's halls anymore, for Howard Hass is retiring. He's had 25 or more years with USDA...first with the old ARS agency as radio-TV specialist, now as leader of the Science and Education information staff's press and special reports group.

In pre-USDA days, Howard was a farm broadcaster at WHO, Des Moines, and WKAR, East Lansing, Mich. He spent a little time with the Iowa Farm Bureau with an advertising and PR agency, and with extension as a 4-H agent...all after graduation from Iowa State U.

He calls it quits on August 31, but will remain in the D.C. area.

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JOB HUNTING? TRY HERE The Agricultural Marketing Service is hunting a public inf specialist...grade 9/11, with promotion potential to a GS-12. Experience in radio-TV is required. Contact is Sam Davis, USDA, AMS, PED, RM 1739-S, 14th & Independence, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250...or call (202) 447-6635. Refer to announcement number AMS-IN-79-7.

The Economics, Statistics and Cooperatives Service needs a grade 9/11 writer-editor mainly for news materials, popular pubs, and periodic reports. Contact is Howard Kahn, ESCS, DAM, PD, OB, 14th and Independence Ave., SW, RM 1470-S, Wash., D.C. 20250. Or call (202) 447-7657. Refer to announcement ESCS-ID-79-137.

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OR, TRY MARYLAND

Bob Rathbone, U of Maryland, is seeking applicants for an experiment station editor job...sort of a science writer type. For details, get in touch with Bob...call him at (301) 454-3621.

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DID WE OR DIDN'T WE?

We can't remember whether we mentioned that Larry Quinn, GPA, received honors from his home state, Oklahoma, recently by being named one of four "Outstanding 4-H Alumni." He got an attractive plaque and was recognized during ceremonies at Oklahoma's state 4-H roundup...all after contacting television station managers and program directors in Kansas and filming stories in South Dakota.

After another contact trip, Layne Beaty, GPA, reported that he was impressed with the way television stations have moved to the suburbs and open country outside cities. He thinks the reasons seem to be the need for more room and rising costs of real estate in downtown areas. He also reported that more stations seem to be being bought by conglomerates, partly as newspaper/broadcasting ownership in single markets is being broken up by the government.

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WHEAT FOR CRUDE?

Several of our travelers have returned with reports that folks kept asking about gasohol and trading bushels for barrels. GPA



recently issued an Issue Briefing Paper on trading wheat for oil. If you didn't get a copy, write Press Division, GPA, and ask for IBP #17, "A Bushel of Wheat for a Barrel of Oil."

One on gasohol should be available in a week or so.

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HANGING IN THERE

When Members of Congress adjourned for recess last week, a number of folks raised the question about what had happened to the GPA request for regional information offices.

Jim Webster, GPA, said they're still in the appropriations bill--reinstated by the Senate. So, now we wait until Congress returns to find out if they'll become a reality.

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HOLD ON THAR...

Oh, the trials of being just a plain, ordinary writer. Consider Larry Marton's work to revise a GPA booklet, "Food Prices Here and Abroad." He ran headlong into the concept of share of disposable income spent on food.

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PROCUREMENT SECTION  
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

USDA material for 1978 says the U.S. average was 16.9%. But with the same basic data, the United Nations will say it averaged 13.8%. Then Larry found a third figure, 10.2%. He quickly disposed of that by discovering it only covered farm-grown food, no imports.

But the difference between the 16.9% and 13.8% was another matter. Hours of detective work in Labor and Commerce departments revealed that the U.S. and the UN view disposable income differently. Both start with the same basic figure, National Income, supplied by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in Commerce.

The U.S. takes out personal taxes and goodies like police fines, state school tuition and personal contributions for social insurance. The UN, however, includes some of the taxes. Result is a UN disposable income figure \$400 billion more than the U.S. figure. Larry has to use the UN material since that is the only way to make comparisons with food expenditures in other countries. Now... when you see one news article featuring the share as 13.8% and another claiming it to be 16.9%, you'll know why.

But there's another kicker. Larry also discovered that if you own your own home and live in it, the Commerce Dept. (or is it the Labor Dept?) assigns it a rental value and then cranks that into your disposable income. All this time, you thought you were paying out your mortgage, while Uncle Sam has been saying, not so...you're really getting rental income.

Well...it's the dog days of August. Nothing goes right then.

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"Inside Information" is published by the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs for information officers and specialists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State Departments of Agriculture, and the Land-Grant Universities. Send contributions to Hal R. Taylor, Deputy Director for Information, (202) 447-7903.